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Put temporary halt to e-cig, shisha smoking, says Dr Subra

PUTRAJAYA: The Health Ministry has recommended a temporary halt to shisha and electronic cigarette smoking until the findings on the risks are announced in two months' time.

Health Minister Datuk Seri Dr S. Subramaniam said his ministry was in discussions with various agencies and related parties to get their views on the effects these methods of smoking have on health.

"From the ministry's viewpoint, we deem these to be also smoking but just using different methods. The smokers will experience the usual effects of smoking except that the tar content might be lower while the nicotine effect remains the same.

"Don't make it (shisha or electronic cigarette smoking) a habit or think it is fashionable," he told a press conference here Wednesday.

An electronic cigarette (e-cig or e-cigarette), personal vaporizer (PV) or electronic nicotine delivery system (ENDS) is a battery-powered vaporizer that simulates the feeling of smoking, but without the tobacco combustion.

It was recently reported that some irresponsible users of these two methods were flavouring the active compounds with cannabis or liquid ketum for an “extra kick”.

Dr Subramaniam said the ministry discouraged people from cultivating ketum plants as a source of income as this was contributing to social problems among youths.

“There have been examples of students consuming ketum water mixed with Coca Cola before going to school. At school their minds are not on studies,” he said.

He added that legislation on banning ketum had already been brought to Parliament but had been delayed due to the need for more consultations.

In KUALA LUMPUR, Malaysian Muslim Consumers Association chief activist Datuk Nadzim Johan urged authorities to probe the use of shisha sticks to find out whether it contains harmful substances that could lead to addiction like drugs.

Speaking at a press conference on a public speaking contest in conjunction with the National Day celebrations, he said the association feared abuse of this method of smoking could end up with the country having a higher number of addicts from the 1.2 million at present.

Bernama has reported that the sticks, which come in the form of a pen in various colours, can be easily bought between RM17 and RM20 per stick. – Bernama

http://www.thestar.com.my/News/Nation/2015/08/12/Vaping-halt-temporary-Subra/